United Nations A/67/269

General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 August 2012

Original: English

Sixty-seventh session
Item 70 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments

United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, which is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/122, describes the recommendations for grants to beneficiary organizations that were adopted by the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery at its sixteenth session, held in Geneva from 28 November to 5 December 2011. It also provides information on policy decisions adopted by the Board.

* A/67/150.

12-45646 (E) 300812

Please recycle

I. Introduction

A. Submission of the report

1. The present report was prepared in accordance with the arrangements approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/122, by which it established the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (the Fund). It presents the recommendations for grants adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Fund at its sixteenth session, held in Geneva from 28 November to 5 December 2011. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights approved those recommendations on behalf of the Secretary-General on 30 December 2011.

B. Mandate of the Fund

2. In line with resolution 46/122, the Fund was established in 1991 with the purpose of extending humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. The Fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations, private or public entities and individuals.

C. Administration of the Fund and Board of Trustees

3. The Secretary-General administers the Fund through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), with the advice of a Board of Trustees and in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

4. The Board of Trustees is composed of five members with relevant experience in the field of human rights and, in particular, in issues of contemporary forms of slavery. They serve in their personal capacity and are appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to equitable geographical distribution and in consultation with their Governments. In June 2011, the Secretary-General renewed the mandates of Ms. Virginia Herrera Murillo (Costa Rica) and Ms. Klara Skrivankova (Czech Republic) for a final term ending on 31 December 2013 and appointed Ms. Asma Jahangir (Pakistan), Mr. George Omona (Uganda) and Mr. Michael Beresford Dottridge (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as new members for a first term, renewable once, ending on 31 December 2013. At the sixteenth session, Ms. Herrera Murillo was appointed Chair by acclamation for one year.

5. Pursuant to recommendations formulated by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in its audit report on the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery of 2007, as at 1 January 2012, the secretariats of the Fund and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture were placed within the Human Rights Treaties Division of OHCHR. A post of Secretary of both Funds was established, and a new post for a fundraiser dedicated to the humanitarian funds was created within the Human Rights Treaties Division and is located in the Donors and External Relations Section of OHCHR.

II. Management of grants

A. Admissibility criteria

6. In accordance with the mandate of the Fund established by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/122, the beneficiaries of assistance from the Fund would include individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. Project admissibility criteria are outlined in the Fund's guidelines.

7. The beneficiary organizations are requested to accept all conditions attached to the grant, such as providing additional documents and/or mid-year and final narrative and financial reports on the use of grants by a given deadline. Upon receipt of this confirmation, the secretariat of the Fund requests the financial services of the United Nations Office at Geneva to disburse funds promptly.

8. The deadline for submitting applications for project grants for 2012 was 31 May 2011; the admissible applications were examined by the Board of Trustees at its sixteenth session. The deadline for submitting applications for project grants for 2013 was 31 May 2012. The admissible applications will be examined by the Board of Trustees at its seventeenth session, to be held in Geneva from 3 to 7 December 2012.

B. Monitoring and evaluation by the Board and the secretariat

9. At its sixteenth session, the Board of Trustees reviewed the situation with regard to the use of previous grants (2001-2010) and remaining reporting obligations, and recommended closing some 149 project files. The Board expressed appreciation that evaluation and monitoring visits to organizations already funded by the Fund or to potential grantees have been undertaken by the Fund secretariat, OHCHR field presences and United Nations country offices and agencies, in Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, France, Haiti, Ireland, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Senegal, South Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Viet Nam, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

III. Financial status of the Fund

10. Between 2009 and 2011, annual voluntary contributions to the Fund decreased by 50 per cent, from an all-time high of $886,482 in 2009 to $457,034 in 2011. This is largely attributed to the ongoing financial crisis, which made it difficult to meet the ever-increasing demands for assistance.

11. The tables below show the contributions and pledges received in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Table 1
Contributions received in 2010

Donor	*Amount (United States dollars)*	*Date of receipt*
States and other entities		
Cyprus	3 480.69	15 November
Egypt	5 000.00	19 April
Germany	369 913.69	19 August
Holy See	1 476.50	17 March
Israel	5 000.00	25 February
Japan	30 000.00	28 June
Spain	26 773.76	29 December
Turkey	6 000.00	23 August
United Arab Emirates	29 977.40	11 March
Total contributions	**477 622.04**	

Table 2
Contributions and pledges received in 2011

Donor	*Amount (United States dollars)*	*Date of receipt*
Contributions		
States and other entities		
Cyprus	2 702.10	29 November
Germany	296 296.30	11 May
Greece	39 421.84	3 January
Holy See	1 500.00	9 September
Israel	5 000.00	13 July
South Africa	7 507.51	24 January
Spain	27 359.78	3 February 2012[a]
Turkey	6 000.00	12 December
United Arab Emirates	29 982.00	9 May
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	40 128.41	7 October
Total, States and other entities	**457 033.81**	

Donor	*Amount (United States dollars)*	*Date of receipt*
Private/public entities		
Individuals	1 135.87	January
Total, private/public entities	**1 135.87**	
Pledges		
Belgium	142 450.14	
Qatar	10 000.00	
Total pledges	**152 450.14**	

[a] Recorded as a 2011 contribution.

Table 3
Contributions and pledges received from 1 January to 10 July 2012

Donor	*Amount (United States dollars)*	*Date of receipt*
Contributions		
Germany	332 005.31	12 April
India	30 000.00	4 April
Israel	20 000.00	10 July
United Arab Emirates	30 000.00	16 March
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	31 645.57	21 March
Total contributions	**443 650.88**	
Pledges		
Turkey	6 000.00	
Total pledges	**6 000.00**	

IV. Sixteenth session of the Board of Trustees

12. The sixteenth session of the Board of Trustees of the Fund was held in Geneva from 28 November to 5 December 2011. Ms. Jahangir was unable to attend the session.

13. At the session, the Board of Trustees examined information prepared by the secretariat concerning the implementation of recommendations adopted at its fifteenth session, the financial situation of the Fund, policy issues, fundraising efforts, applications for project grants, and financial and narrative reports on the use of previous grants. In line with the guidelines of the Fund and the Board's policies, the Board took into account the importance of the gender dimension, thematic

priorities and national and regional distribution when considering new applications for project grants.

14. It discussed cooperation with other United Nations bodies, mechanisms and procedures, including cooperation with the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Trafficking Fund) administered by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the fellowship programme, the follow-up to the implementation of the OIOS recommendations formulated in 2007 and the activities undertaken in 2011 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Fund.

A. Recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees

15. The Board of Trustees examined 318 admissible applications for project grants from 77 countries, amounting to approximately $4,183,000. Approximately 116 applications were declared inadmissible. The Board recommended 52 project grants for a total amount of $497,000, which will assist non-governmental organizations in 41 countries in the five regions of the world.

16. Figures I and II below illustrate the breakdown of the 52 approved grants, by region and by type of contemporary slavery:

Figure I
Grants awarded by region

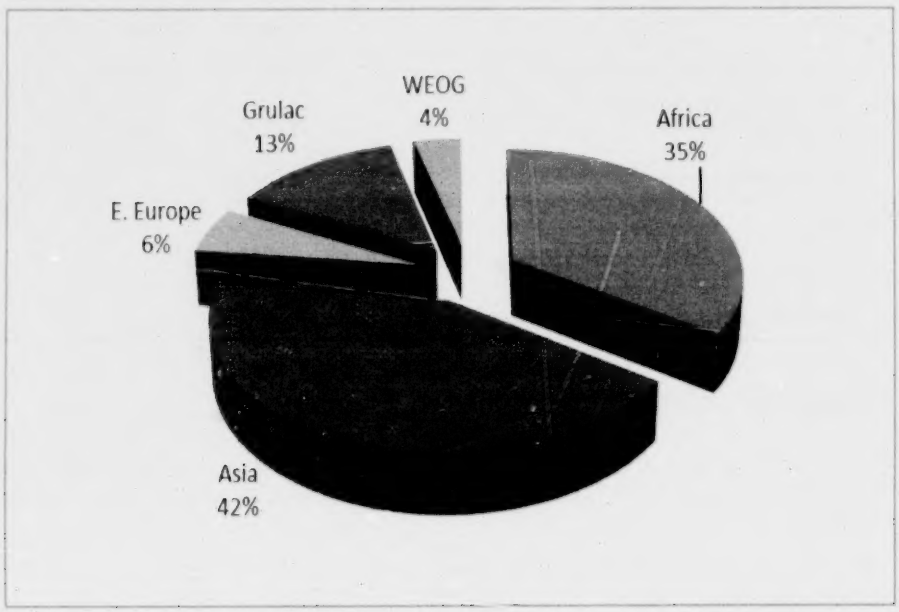
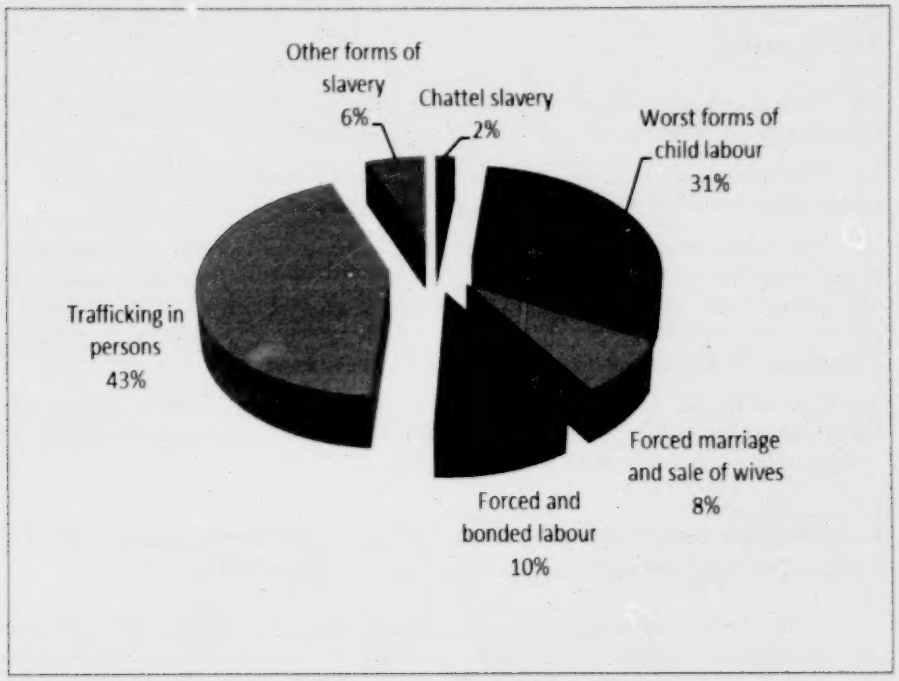


Figure II
Grants awarded by type of contemporary slavery


Other forms of slavery 6%
Chattel slavery 2%
Worst forms of child labour 31%
Trafficking in persons 43%
Forced marriage and sale of wives 8%
Forced and bonded labour 10%

B. Policy decisions

17. The Board of Trustees recommended that projects be selected based on the quality of the project, geographical distribution, type of assistance provided and gender balance. It reiterated the need to support projects adopting a strategy that addresses the root cause of the problem, combined with direct assistance and income-generating activities that assist victims of contemporary forms of slavery.

18. The Board of Trustees endorsed maintaining a one-year funding policy. Subject to funding availability, organizations can receive funding for up to five consecutive years, after which a break of at least one year is required. Out of the 52 project grants approved at the sixteenth session, 23 were approved for organizations that had previously received funding from the Fund.

19. At its fourteenth session, the Board of Trustees recommended the establishment of a fellowship programme for members of human rights organizations, notably those working on contemporary forms of slavery. The programme is aimed at providing an opportunity to gain first-hand experience, knowledge and skills in the field of international human rights in general and in contemporary forms of slavery in particular.

20. In line with this recommendation, the fellowship programme was established for an initial period of four months, from August to December 2010. Owing to the

effectiveness of the programme, the Board recommended that two fellowships be extended for an additional period from January 2011 to September 2012.

C. Fundraising

21. The Board of Trustees noted that the Fund is currently working with the minimum level of required resources to fulfil its mandate.

22. The Board estimated that the Fund would need at least $1.5 million before its seventeenth session in 2012 to satisfactorily meet demand.

23. The Board noted the statement made by the Secretary-General on 2 December 2011 for the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, in which he appealed to all Governments, business enterprises, non-governmental organizations and other partners to demonstrate their commitment to fighting slavery by making a financial contribution to the Fund and by working closely together to end that scourge.

24. The Board decided that in the second semester of 2012, a letter signed by the Chair should be sent to all Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva appealing for contributions to the Fund.

D. Cooperation with United Nations agencies and developments in the United Nations system concerning relevant mandates

25. At its sixteenth session, the Board of Trustees met with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences (hereinafter the Special Rapporteur). The Special Rapporteur briefed the Board about developments relating to her mandate and discussed future collaboration with the Fund in terms of dissemination of information and support for country missions.

26. The Board recommended that a budget line be allocated to cover travel expenses of selected grass-roots non-governmental organizations to enable them to attend regional, subregional and national meetings organized within the framework of the country visits of the Special Rapporteur. These non-governmental organizations also contribute to the implementation of the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur in her reports.

27. The Board also met with a representative from the secretariat of the Trafficking Fund at UNODC to discuss potential channels of collaboration and synergies between both Funds. The Board was briefed on the various types of projects supported by the Trafficking Fund in the first cycle of grants and on its monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

28. The Board recommended that the secretariats of the two Funds organize regular meetings to ensure continued collaboration with the aim of avoiding duplication of work. In addition, awareness-raising materials should also include cross references to both Funds.

V. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery and twentieth anniversary of the Fund

29. In September 2011, a photograph exhibition entitled "Breaking free from slavery: a visual journey through 20 years of assistance to victims of contemporary forms of slavery" was on display at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The exhibition was opened by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur and the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees. In addition, at the eighteenth session of the Human Rights Council, the Board of Trustees organized a joint side event with the Special Rapporteur on child slavery in the mining and quarrying sector.

30. On 2 December 2011, an event was organized in Geneva to commemorate the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Members of the Board of Trustees, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and three grant beneficiaries delivered presentations, followed by an interactive dialogue. The event was attended by over 20 States representatives and representatives of civil society.

31. On 2 December 2011, the Board also made the following statement to commemorate the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery:

> The United Nations marks 2 December each year as the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery to remind the international community that slavery is not a practice that has been banished, but one which continues to blight lives and to demand action to prevent contemporary forms of slavery and to protect and assist more than twelve million adults and children who are currently victims.
>
> These practices include but are not limited to debt bondage, serfdom, forced labour, trafficking in persons and trafficking for the purpose of organ removal, sexual slavery, various forms of child labour, the forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, forced marriage, the sale of wives and widow inheritance. These and other forms violate the most fundamental of human rights and the fundamental dignity of the human being.
>
> The past 12 months have seen exciting initiatives to encourage the world's business enterprises to respect human rights (the Human Rights Council endorsed the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: the Implementation of the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework in June 2011) and the trustees of the Fund welcome the news that businesses around the world have made new commitments to stopping contemporary forms of slavery from occurring in their workplaces or supply chains. While Governments bear the primary responsibility for the implementation of human rights, the private sector also has an integral role to play in eradicating contemporary forms of slavery.
>
> The time is ripe for concerted action by business to ensure their activities do not cause or contribute to contemporary forms of slavery (or other adverse human rights impacts) and to refuse to do business with any companies which are shown to use or profit from forced labour. Businesses should include human rights principles, in compliance with international agreements ratified by the country in which they operate and when they operate internationally,

including provisions on the prevention of and protection against forced labour, in their contracts with joint venture partners, suppliers and subcontractors.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, a Fund that was created to support efforts by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help victims of contemporary forms of slavery to regain their independence, lives and dignity. The Fund has provided support to more than 400 projects which have directly assisted thousands of victims and potential victims in more than 90 countries in all regions of the world. Projects undertaken with the support of the Fund include medical, psychological, legal, educational, and vocational training and income-generating activities for victims of contemporary forms of slavery while fighting the social factors that create circumstances fostering slavery.

On this day, the five trustees of the Fund pay tribute to all Governments, civil society organizations and individuals who have made contributions to the Fund or otherwise engaged in activities aimed at eradicating contemporary forms of slavery and ensuring that all those subjected to such exploitation are assisted in recovering so they can live decent lives.

On this occasion, we recall that the Fund needs a minimum of $1.5 million per year to fulfil its mandate, but less than a third of this amount has been secured so far. We join in on the appeal made today by the Secretary-General, to all Governments, business enterprises, non-governmental organizations and other partners to demonstrate their commitment to fighting slavery by making a financial contribution to the Fund and by working closely together to end this scourge.

We express our profound commitment to the ongoing struggle against slavery and particularly to the victims.

VI. How to contribute to the Fund

32. Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities can contribute to the Fund. Donors should indicate "for the Slavery Fund, account SH" on a payment order. For information on how to contribute, donors are requested to contact the secretariat of the Fund at: Secretariat of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations, CH 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; E-mail: slaveryfund@ohchr.org; Telephone: 41 22 917 9376; Fax: 41 22 917 9017.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

33. **Owing to the funding constraints, at its sixteenth session, the Board of Trustees was able to recommend only 52 grants amounting to $497,000, which represents approximately 10 per cent of the total amount requested. The Board estimates that, in order to be able to fulfil its mandate and respond positively to new applications received in 2012, the Fund would need new contributions**

amounting to at least $1.5 million prior to the seventeenth session of the Board, to be held from 3 to 7 December 2012.

34. **In the light of the difficult financial situation faced in 2011, donors and potential donors are encouraged to increase their support to the Fund so that it can expand its crucial assistance to victims of slavery. In respect of the next cycle, donors are invited to contribute to the Fund before November 2012 in order for the contributions to be duly recorded by the United Nations Treasurer in advance of the seventeenth session of the Board.**